

Constructing an Intergrated Service Excellence Model for the South African Police Service

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Abstract:- The central purpose of this study, which is situated in the community of practice of the South African Police Services (SAPS), is to establish an integrated service excellence template, with which to improve service standards. This upgrade will be to the benefit of the SAPS as a whole as well as to the advantage of the citizens living in the Northern Cape Province in particular. The development of a service excellence model which will be used to assess the services provided by the SAPS is justified, because this tool is a crucial means of upgrading the assistance offered by the SAPS to the civilian population. Unfortunately service failures negatively impact community interconnections and SAPS promotion efforts, which often leads to a 'last ditch' endeavour to restore clients' satisfaction through service recovery efforts. So, implementing improved services from the outset will be beneficial to both the SAPS and the community as a whole. This article adopted a qualitative research methodology which allowed the researcher to reflect, to verify the research question and to corroborate the problem statement. This article makes actionable recommendations, emanating from the research findings.

Keywords:- South African Police Service; Service delivery; Service failure, Service quality, Service recovery, Service excellence, Complaint management, Customer service, Customer satisfaction, Customer expectation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Policing encompasses a wide range of services and offers diverse assistance to the population, which can be assigned to discrete government bureaus. Police agencies worldwide have a common purpose: to deliver "effective and efficient service to the communities in which they are situated" (Sonderling, 2003:1). The South African Police Service in its objectives similarly emphasizes the importance of providing effectual and constructive solutions to its clients i.e. the South African public (SAPS (i), 2005:5). The values of the SAPS are recorded in the strategic plan for 2020-2025 and include supplying "a responsible effective and highly quality service with honesty and integrity."

The Constitutional mandate of the SAPS (according to Section 205 (1) (2) (3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) deals with the establishment of the police service and catalogues its functions as follows: "to prevent, combat and investigate crime, to maintain public order, to protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property, and uphold and enforce the law". Cheminais, Bayat and Van der Waldt (1998:81) state that when providing safety and security to civilians, the conduct

of every police officer should be professional and offered in the best interests of the public. (It is key to note that the public sector is contingent on public scrutiny.) The above-mentioned principles highlight the importance of public administration being run along ethical lines as this is critical for the effective implementation of a principled framework within the SAPS.

The SAPS has a Service Delivery Improvement Programme (SDIP) that aims to improve service delivery to communities at a local level (South African Police Service Journal, 2006:6-19). This initiative provides police station managers with practical tools to implement enhanced service delivery while also attempting to instil a culture of first-hand management and an increase in community involvement. This worldview is embodied in the mission statement of the SDIP: "The primary goal is service to the public" (SAPS s.a.:78). Interestingly recent research by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) at 45 of the 219 SAPS priority police stations in South Africa, indicates that the majority of clients who dealt directly with the police were satisfied with the services they received. This is in sharp contrast to the popular narrative among the general public regarding perceptions of the police (ISS, 2001).

Excellent service delivery is critical to the client's perception of the merit and worth of an institution, is core to its favourable review and, ultimately the advancement of the organisation. Outstanding customer service includes "the essential aspects of expedient service delivery; open and honest communication; individual, personalised service; engendering customer loyalty; problem-solving; under-promising and over-delivering; meeting and exceeding expectations; efficient use of infrastructure, systems and procedures to facilitate efficient operations and, in particular, effective use of knowledge management with a focus on customer lifecycle care" (Kingstone, Tipper, Ristic and Ngan, 2004:269-271).

Internationally, organisations involved in service industries have placed an emphasis on achieving user glee through service excellence. This allows these institutions to secure their position relative to their competition and to establish positive, long-term user relationship (Gouthier, Giese and Barth, 2012:447-464). Service excellence, therefore, refers to the provision of an exceptional service standard through an active, participatory, management administration, which exceeds the customer's prior expectations and results in not only customer appreciation but also customer pleasure and consequently an escalation of customer loyalty (Enquist, Edvardsson and Sebhatu, 2011:535-551).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The legislation which is relevant to the upgrading of service delivery is briefly discussed below:

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) Section 2 states:

“This Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic, law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled”

Moreover, Section 197(1) stipulates:

“Within public administration there is a public service for the Republic, which must function and be structured in terms of national legislation, and which must loyally execute the lawful policies of the government-of-the-day.”

Section 195(1) of the Constitution focuses on the conduct of public officials in the three spheres of government: “public administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution”. The researcher stresses the importance of “human dignity, the achievement of equality, the advancement of human rights and freedoms, non-racialism and non-sexism” (which are listed in Section 1) to the smooth running of public-service delivery.

Additional principles that specifically speak to public service delivery (listed in Section 195(1) are:

“services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;

people’s needs must be responded to and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making;

efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted;

transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information; and
public administration must be development-oriented.”

White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (WPTPS), 1995& 1997

The focus of the WPTPS (1995) is:

“...to establish a framework to guide the introduction and implementation of new policies and legislation aimed at transforming the South African public service”.

The WPTPS (1997) describes the transformation of the Public Service in South Africa in to an elected, prototypical, exemplary member for executing government policies and thereby meeting the needs of the people.

The following concepts are a guide to the process:

“service providers should be committed to the provision of high quality services to all South Africans in an unbiased and impartial manner;

they should be efficient, effective and productive as well as responsive to the needs of the public;

they should be representative of all sections and levels of South African society;

they must be democratic in their internal procedures and in their relations with the public;

they should be accessible, informative, accountable and open to public scrutiny.”

The notion of putting ‘People First’ in respect to public service delivery is set out in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (WPTPSD, 1997). Chapter 11 of this report sets down the mission statement below to identify and guarantee the following strategies which promote and improve the standard of service delivery:

“list services to be provided, to which groups, and at which service charges;

catalogue priorities, the principles of affordability, and the principle of redirecting resources to areas and groups previously under-resourced;

define outputs and targets of service standards and performance indicators; benchmark these against comparable international standards;

monitor and evaluate mechanisms and structures designed to measure progress and introduce corrective action;

checklist plans for staffing, human resource development and organisational capacity building, tailored to boost service delivery needs;

redirect human and other resources from administrative tasks to service provision, particularly crucial for disadvantaged groups and areas;

record financial plans that link budgets directly to service needs and personnel plans;

identify potential partnerships with the private sector, NGOs or community organizations which will provide more effective forms of service delivery; and develop a culture of customer care and an approach to service delivery that is sensitive to issues of race, gender and disability.”

III. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP) 2030

The National Development Plan (NDP) of 2030 proposes a comprehensive approach to resolving the causes of crime. It involves an active citizenry working closely and responsibly with both state and non-state candidates. Chapter 12 of the NDP identifies ‘Building Safer Communities’ as a key objective. Berg, Cartwright, Lamb and Mc Donald (2014:7) suggest that the NPD 2030 is compatible with the National Planning Commission (2012) which states that once democratic policing in South Africa has been achieved, the police service will be demilitarised and professionally run. Furthermore the NDP 2030 expects the police to “serve the community, safeguard lives and property without discrimination, protect the peaceful against violence and the weak against intimidation, and respect the constitutional rights of all to equality and justice”.

In order to achieve this vision, the NDP has identified as essential an integrated crime elimination approach incorporating a well-functioning criminal justice system, the police, an unbiased prosecuting authority& judiciary and an efficiently run correctional services system. In accordance

with these needs, the NDP has identified the following six priorities to achieving a crime-free South Africa:

“strengthening the criminal justice system;
 professionalising the police service;
 demilitarising the police service;
 increasing the rehabilitation of prisoners and reducing recidivism;
 building safety using an integrated approach; and
 increasing community participation in safety.”

The NDP places significant emphasis on the part local government plays in identifying the root cause of crime (including the economic and social factors), the safety needs of individual communities as well as integrating unique safety and security measures into their future projects.

According to Fox (2005: 59-60) treating inhabitants of an area as ‘customers’ is helpful as it implies that the principles that are fundamental to the provision of services for commercial gain are equally important in public service delivery. These include:

Listening to and acting on the needs and views of customers when making decisions about which services should be offered to them;

Treating all customers with respect;

Ensuring that the promised service delivery is suitable and of the highest quality;

Responding quickly and empathetically and should the level of service fall below the promised excellent standard.

Madjid, Hadiwidjojo, Surachman and Djumahir (2013:55) describe service as “a valuable action, deed, or effort performed to satisfy a need or to fulfil a demand for someone”. Due to the unique nature of customer service, customer support agents have a significant impact on the formation of customer expectations, managing and controlling customer experiences and shaping the final evaluation of the client assistance (Gazzoli, Hancer and Kim, 2013:382).

Kotler and Armstrong (2014:248) further add that “services are a form of product that consists of activities, benefits, or satisfactions offered for sale that are essentially intangible and do not result in ownership of anything”. Solomon, Marshall and Stuart (2012:19) argue that services are helpful products that are supplied by the producer and for the customer. A ‘service’ is “an activity, process or set of steps which involve the handling of a customer or something belonging to them, where the customer is also involved, and performs some role, in the service process” (Johnston, Clark and Shulver, 2012:12). These opinions are very close to the standpoint of this researcher who feels that within the SAPS all assistance and activity should take place with the goal of satisfying the customer’s needs and enhancing their experience at community service centres and stations.

IV. CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT:

There are seven central initiatives in offering client service, as highlighted by Pegler (2002:42). These steps mirror the Principles of Batho Pele (people first). They are defined below:

• Step 1: Define the customer satisfaction objectives and the strategy to be implemented to achieve these objectives/goals

Identify both the customer and the institution’s goals; set deliverables to realize the goals according to the customers’ requirements.

• Step 2: Segment the customer-base

Sort the customers according to their diverse and unique traits.

• Step 3: Identify crucial needs and any/all performance gaps

It is essential that institutions identify the key needs to achieving their goals and the gaps in their performance, and strive towards effecting continuous improvement in order to meet their goals.

• Step 4: Develop programmes to improve performance

Institutions need to factor in customer care in their development of programmes that are geared to meeting their deliverables.

• Step 5: Constant monitoring of changes in customer behaviours

Proactive institutions listen to customer responses and adjust their service delivery to meet the client’s needs.

• Step 6: Improve customer satisfaction

The focus on e-Governance systems is of particular relevance to current Governmental service delivery, for example SARS e-Filing and Multi-Purpose Community Centre’s (MPCCs). Appropriate and professional use of information technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to bring services closer to the people through the mode of communication automation is pivotal this step.

• Step 7: Continuous measurement of progress toward improved advancement

Performance development programmes must be ongoing, should pivot on a holistic approach and should aim to be institution-wide to achieve the goals set out in step 1.

According to Andreassen (1994: 22), maintaining a value-based relationship with the customers (whom it should be remembered Government Agencies, including the SAPS, are called to serve) is dependent on three principal factors:

understanding the customers’ needs both current and future; turn this understanding into actions which are implemented right across the institution/organization; and designing and implementing a marketing mix which quickly and effectively adapts their company’s understanding of their customers’ requirements based on the customer’s responses.

This approach leads to effecting continuous improvements in service delivery and results in long-term exceptional quality.

V. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The African Peer Review Mechanism Report identified poor service delivery as an area which South Africa has to address as it has a significant impact on the quality of governance (Mkhabela and Eshmael, 2007:8). The South African Police Service is not immune from that impact. Numerous studies conducted on the standard of customer service offered by the South African Police Service reveal that most people are not receiving the quality of service that they are entitled to in terms of the Batho Pele (People First) Principles (Philips and Hardy, 2002; Gqada, 2004; Bardien, 2005; Zondi, 2012). Over the years the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (SA, 1997) has been reviewed in an effort to develop strategies that will succeed in improving public service delivery and educate citizens about their rights and how, by exercising these rights, to access government services responsibly.

Complaints are one of the measures that can be used to assess the calibre of services rendered by the SAPS. The Independent Complaints Directorate's annual report for 2016/17 indicates that the SAPS received 7014 complaints against its members (Independent Complaints Directorate 2016/17). Of these 319 cases came from the Northern Cape police force which equates to 28% of the total. Complaints generated from the Northern Cape are relatively high in comparison with provinces such as the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, North West and Limpopo which measured 46%; 23%; 14% and 5% respectively. Of importance is the fact that the Northern Cape is the least populated province in the country with a population of approximately 1,214,000 million people (2,1% = Northern Cape population as a percentage of the total population), nevertheless the Northern Cape remains the province with the smallest percentage of complaints as compared to the above-mentioned provinces which have population figures that vary from 4 million to 7 million in people (Stats, SA-2017:5).

According to a study conducted by Schwartz (2007:3), numerous complaints of poor service delivery (including the non-attendance to complaints by the East Rand Police Service) have been lodged with independent watchdogs. There has been considerable speculation about the reason for this with many senior officers and station commanders assuming that a lack of discipline and the demilitarisation of the SAPS may be responsible for the poor service delivery. They believe that although police officers are competent, they do not provide a polished service because it demands more effort and input than they are willing to give. Consequently, police officers seem to have adopted a negative attitude towards customer service.

VI. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the research is formulated by stating the problem and provides the angle from which the research will be conducted. Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2011:28) state that "the rationale stands as a statement of how a researcher developed an interest in a particular topic or area of research". In this study the main objective will be: to develop an integrated service excellence model that can be used as a framework or measuring instrument, to establish the perceptions that communities hold with regard to services which the SAPS supplies, in the Northern Cape province. The design of such a model is justified, because assessing conduct is an essential means to improving the SAPS customer services. In order to achieve the main objective, the following sub-objectives will be analysed:

- Determine and deeply explore the problems that will need to be addressed to obtain service excellence;
- Identify and describe management tools and approaches that can be used to enhance quality in the quest for five star service;
- Conduct a literature study on relevant theories of service excellence;
- Develop a non-discriminatory model to be used to improve service quality in, and the assistance provided to clients by, the SAPS.

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to Flick (2011:103) the research question is often the steering inquiry that emphasises the focus of the study from a comprehensive perspective. The research question of this study is:

Is there a lack of understanding concerning the service delivery process, from the clients point of view, of services provided by the South African Police Service in the Northern Cape?

The research question is governed by a literature review and clarified by the research design and methodology.

B. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

A deduction has been made that the findings of this study, if implemented, will benefit both South African communities and the SAPS. It will help the SAPS to understand the perceptions of community members, the relationship of service and service quality with customer satisfaction as well as addressing customer expectation and complaints management within the SAPS.

The study will make an important contribution to the existing body of knowledge by empirically testing the influence of service quality on the other stated constructs, which will pinpoint and link the service quality gaps that the SAPS should fill to overcome customer dissatisfaction and negative word of mouth (WOM) communication by customers. The study will contribute to the SAPS management and service marketing literature by conceptualizing a formative service quality construct, while also proposing a valid and reliable scale for assessing service quality. This will help overcome the areas of

weakness within the SAPS. The excellent service model proposed following the findings of this research can be used to measure the quality and effectiveness of the service provided by the SAPS. It may be that the service quality is high, but that the effectiveness is low, or vice-versa.

In topical literature relating to the evaluation of service quality, two divergent connections emerge. The first is the link between service quality as a stand-alone function and its customers or consumers, and the other is the link between front-line staff and supporting staff. Although Seth and Deshmukh (2005:946) stress the correlation between delivery of services, business performance and the service quality delivered to the customer, in this research only the service quality (as perceived by/reported on by a tranche of clients) could be evaluated. Any conclusions on the service quality as perceived by the customer may, however, also indicate possible strong or weak points in the relationship between the front-line staff and support staff.

C. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is not limited to examining topic-relevant secondary sources that have already been published, but questions were also posed to 12 voluntary participants and the two sources of information were used together to develop an integrated service excellence model which can be used as a framework, or measuring instrument, to establish the perceptions that communities in the Northern Cape hold with regard to the services the SAPS provides to them.

VII. METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative research procedures which consists of a set of interpretative, material tests that make the thought-world visible and therefore measurable. Qualitative research includes field notes, conversations, recorded interviews, photographs and memos, amongst others. It involves an interpretative, representational approach to ordering the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, “attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013).

The researcher attempted to unpack the views of the participants with relation to service excellence and then to construct an integrated protocol to be used to improve service quality in the South African Police Service as a whole and in the Northern Cape province in particular. Primary sources comprised the transcripts of the interviews with all 12 participants. Secondary sources included literature reviews, journal articles, newspapers, annual reports and legislation relevant to the research topic. Interviews were conducted with senior management and cluster commanders in the Northern Cape Province. This sample group has been purposefully chosen because of their understanding of the issues under investigation.

VIII. RESEARCH POPULATION, SAMPLE SIZE AND PROCEDURE

Babbie (2013:115) states that the ‘target population’ refers to all possible participants who can provide information on the subject under investigation. The target population for this study consists of SAPS senior managers and cluster commanders in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. Seven open-ended questions were put to the target population, with a view to soliciting responses about the topic of this study. This group was deliberately selected, as the researcher was specifically attempting to acquire well-informed and high-quality responses to the questioning (Wengraf, 2001). Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest, Namey and Mack (2005) emphasize that open-ended questions could evoke responses from the participants that are meaningful and philosophically salient but quite unanticipated by the researcher. This researcher wishes to highlight that this purposive sampling method increased the validity of the findings, as the data was acquired from participants with practical and reasoned awareness about the topic (Wengraf, 2001). Tongco (2007) defines purposive sampling (also known as judgment sampling) as a deliberate choice of an informant, due to the qualities the informant possesses. During analysis, purposive sampling relies on the experience and judgment of the researcher to select the units (for example, people, cases/organizations, events, pieces of data) that are to be included in and appraised by the study.

Compared to probability sampling techniques the sample being investigated via purposive sampling is quite small, this researcher’s sample was twelve (12) participants. This study relied on a non-probability purposive sampling technique to select 12 ($n = 12$) participants and the sample size was restricted to 12 participants owing to data saturation (Hennink & Kaiser, 2017:3). Saturation may happen in qualitative interviews when subsequent participants begin to repeat answers indistinguishable from those already captured. Boddy (2016:426) indicated that samples as low as 12 would be good to avoid data saturation among a relatively homogeneous population (for example the population of policing executives).

A. DATA COLLECTION

An interview technique which explored contributor’s thoughts was utilised to collect data from the study participants. Each interview which lasted for an average of 40 minutes was audio recorded (with the participant’s consent), and. The semi-structured interview questions included: “How can you improve service delivery to customers?”; “What does ‘customer service excellence’ mean to you?”; “What is excellent customer service?”; “How do you provide excellent customer service?” and “How do you and your team identify and deliver the standards required by your customers?”

B. DATA ANALYSIS

Once data collection was complete, textual analysis (McKee, 2003) was used to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures within the SANDF make sense of who they are, and how they fit into the world (and organization) in which they live. The

responses are analyzed by thematic analysis and coding of the verbatim transcripts. Coding involves identifying the themes that resonate/repeat in the answers. Thereafter, a thorough analysis of every interview transcript was conducted to collate thematic data in accordance with the pre-identified themes.

C. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study complied with research ethics regarding sensitive issues such as anonymity, confidentiality, and transparency of stakeholders. Importantly, the researcher first sought the authority to gather this data from the three key institutions of law enforcement within the SAPS, which was duly granted. The researcher also received clearance from the Ethics Sub-Committee of the Faculty of Arts, Nelson Mandela University. All the participants were informed of the reason for the study and their prerogative to withdraw from the study at any time was emphasized; all participants willingly signed the voluntary undertaking to participate in the study.

IX. FINDINGS

This study makes every effort to achieve the objectives set out above. This is all in an effort to address and answer the problem statement. The researcher was able to achieve the aims of the study.

Objective one: Determine the challenges and explore the solutions that need to be addressed in order to obtain service excellence in the SAPS. The first research question: How can you improve service delivery to customers?

Findings from this study assert that for service delivery to be efficient and effective the management at all levels of the SAPS should be consistent. The Constitution provides the framework for service delivery in governmental agencies, and the SAPS in line with this scheme, therefore, must be dedicated to outstanding service delivery.

SMP1 had high expectations of policing and responded as follows: *“...SAPS must take time to train frontline staff: The heart of your customer operation should rest with the frontline staff. SAPS to take the responsibility and not the credit: Go the extra mile: going the extra mile can change stressful (or ordinary) experiences into positive and well-remembered ones; highlight the organisations ability to not only empathise with its customers but also enact real change that positively affects them as well. Take advantage of negative feedback: addressing a complaint or bad experience shows customers that their voices are being heard and that each individual is a valued customer [sic]”*.

SMP3 responded as follows to the question: *“...SAPS can improve customer service delivery by responding speedily to customer complaints: by listening to the customer and responding in a way that the customer can understand. Know your customers: when a customer comes for service, your personnel must provide good service according to the customer’s need. Go the extra mile: give the customer good service, in terms of keeping yourself and the customer happy [sic]”*.

MP4 answered: *“...strengthen police officers skills: teams must have the right skills, which include listening and making notes as the body language plays a vital role, first impressions last. Clear communication: address the customer in a clear understandable voice, appropriate language and allow questions from the customer to avoid misunderstanding. Knowledge: the SAPS provides training throughout SAPS training academy’s and decentralised training centres in provinces. The centres provide all kind of training to enhance police officers skills [sic]”*.

In summary SMP6, responded as follows: *“...service delivery to customers can be improved through customer feedback: to provide excellent customer services to the public, we as the SAPS need to understand our customer’s needs, their experiences and their pain. We must provide them with multiple channels for their feedback like physical surveys on feedback cards in the community service centres, telephonic feedback through surveys as well as via emails. Strengthen the team that are responsible for customer service: SAPS to build a strong customer service team. Handle customers with patience and empathy: Our customers are from different facets of life and backgrounds. Some may be in physical or emotional pain, some annoyed, angry or confused [sic]”*.

Objective two: Identify and describe management tools and approaches that can be used to improve the caliber of service excellence. “How do you and your team identify and deliver the standards required by your customers?”

According to SMP12: *“...customer service standards refer to the interactions between a business and customer, and the resulting customer expectations. Response time, empathy, resolution, and efficiency can go a long way towards building deeper customer relationships [sic]”*.

SMP10 responded as follows: *“...reliability:the service needs to reliably function as advertised every time the customer wants to use it. Performance:the service needs to perform correctly so the customer can achieve their goals. Efficiency:the service needs to be efficient for the customer by streamlining an otherwise time-consuming process [sic]”*.

SMP8 responded: *“...by being compatible:the service needs to be compatible with what customer is already using or receiving. Empathy:when your customers get in touch with customer service, they want empathy and understanding from the people assisting them. Fairness:customers need to be treated fairly at all times by the services you provide [sic]”*.

SMP8 remarked: *“...functionality: customers need our service to function 100 % so that their need can be satisfied by providing a good standard of service. Our service must be a convenient solution for their need, whatever it may be. Experience: the experience that each customer has after using your service must be of such a manner that everything is clear and easy to go forward and not creating more work or confusion to your customers [sic]”*.

The questions on the participants' views regarding delivering the standards required by clients, demonstrated an understanding of customer needs and problems encountered by customers.

Objective three: Solving problems encountered by customers. "Can you describe a time when you've been proactive in finding a solution to a problem encountered by your customers?"

SMP7 stated that: "...assembling the right team– I believe that customer service starts on the inside and works its way toward the customer. This starts with hiring the right people for the job, followed by training. Train people to not just deal with the problem when a customer calls, but to also be proactive and help customers with problems they don't yet know they might face [sic]".

SMP9 responded: "...proactive customer service is an approach of the SAPS to support the customer with his needs and to make the first move from the side of the police. If a customer approaches me and cannot speak English or Afrikaans, it is my duty as a member of the SAPS, to immediately get a person who can translate the need of the customer, or who can help the customer in the language of his choice [sic]".

SMP3 answered: "...as a police officer, my primary responsibility is to prevent and investigate crime. With each customer, I analyze their case to determine if we can immediately see, alternatively, solution to their problem. I then develop a plan and, if warranted, perform follow-up calls to check on the process of the case [sic]".

Questions were asked relating to the SAPS implementation of strategies to improve service delivery and also about whether these strategies have an effect on service delivery enhancement. The response from the majority of participants indicates that they are not satisfied with the quality of service provided by the SAPS to the communities.

Objective four: Develop a non-discriminatory service excellence protocol to be used to improve the delivery of service quality in the South African Police Service (SAPS) to achieve (and continuously improve) service excellence through in the assistance provided. "Do the SAPS members receive regular training on how to maintain service excellence knowledge and professional competency?"

SMP1 stated that: "...yes, as a senior official in SAPS, I can state that all members in SAPS have received training in client management [sic]".

SMP11 responded that: "...yes, all members in SAPS including me have received training on customer service and client service including community service centre management [sic]".

SMP5, stated that: "...yes, all SAPS members receive training on service delivery as part of the learning programs presented through the training academies and decentralised human resource development centres [sic]".

SMP6 confirmed: "...yes, all members do receive formal training. The SAPS has formal training centres for each cluster in the Northern Cape to take formal training down to station level. At Galeshewe there's "Witdam police training centre" for the Frances Baard cluster, which is also the biggest centre in the province. SAPS members must indicate on their pep documents what training is needed to comply with their job descriptions. The commanders as the employer representatives confirm that the need analysis is correct and does reflect on the training plan for his specific component. From here the members get nominated to attend the course the empower him/her. Nominated members get called up and attend courses locally as well as nationally[sic]".

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the findings from this investigation the researcher recommends the implementation of a non-discriminatory service excellence protocol, in order to improve service quality worth in the SAPS and to continuously improve the delivery of service excellence in the Northern Cape in particular. The participants in this research project expressed their views by identifying gaps in the quality of services provided by the SAPS to the many communities in the Northern Cape. The evolution of a service excellence protocol to assess the services provided by the SAPS is justified, because this is an indispensable method of improving the services rendered to all clients, which will be beneficial to both the SAPS and to the communities it serves. The researcher believes implementation of this model will have positive effects and will make the task of policing easier and cheaper.

The Front-line Service Delivery programme, in support of the SDIP, implemented a structured model to address each police station's service point. This was supported by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in order to visibly detect, record and evaluate services and to ensure that corrective actions were taken where the results were found to be poor (SA 2015a, 2015-2016:11). Further research has been conducted by the South African Management Development Institute and their study found that "service delivery in the public service is made up of systems that are arranged for the satisfactory fulfillment of various demands by undertaking purposeful activities with optimum use of resources in order to develop effective, efficient and economic services resulting in measurable and acceptable benefits to customers"(2003:5).

XI. CONCLUSION

The discussion in this article centres around themes identified during a qualitative study involving interviews with participants, all of whom are actively involved in the process of service delivery within the SAPS. Input was collected on how the customer operations can be improved. The researcher analysed and interpreted the data and graphically presented his findings. These findings will be utilised, together with the thematic analysis of the qualitative data, to provide recommendations in the development of a protocol model which can be used by the SAPS to address public trust in the police service.

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